

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

*Chief Ronal W. Serpas*



## Office of the State Fire Marshal *State Fire Marshal Mary Corso*

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### **When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!** **Fire Prevention Week is October 5-11, 2003**

Chief Ronal W. Serpas announced today that October 5-11 is **Fire Prevention Week**. 2003 – The State Fire Marshal is reaching out to residents this fall with a Fire Prevention Week campaign designed to save lives and prevent injuries by teaching important information about having smoke alarms and fire escape drills.

Fire Prevention Week is the basis for public fire safety awareness activities in fire departments and elementary schools across North America. The 2003 Fire Prevention Week theme, "When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!" is a lifesaving reminder to leave right away when the smoke alarm goes off, and to stay out until firefighters say it is safe to go back inside.

"This Fire Prevention Week, we are concentrating our efforts on making sure residents of Washington understand that they need working smoke alarms on every level of their home, and they should plan ahead of time how they would get out if fire strikes, and practice that plan regularly," says State Fire Marshal Mary Corso. "Having early warning of a fire, and following a well-practiced escape plan to get out quickly – and stay out – can make the difference between surviving a fire and dying in one."

To reach residents with these lifesaving messages, the office of the State Fire Marshal is joining forces with the Washington State Association of Fire Marshals and with NFPA (National Fire Protection Association), the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 80 years. According to NFPA, half of all fatal home fires occur in the small number of homes that have no smoke alarms.

Judy Comoletti, NFPA assistant vice president for public education, says many people overestimate the amount of time they may have to get out of a fire. "A fire can become deadly in only moments, making every second count. That's why we're working with groups like the State Fire Marshal and local fire departments to raise awareness of the importance of installing smoke alarms and planning and practicing fire drills."

The Fire Prevention Week 2003 advice is simple:

- Install working smoke alarms on each level of the home, and test them monthly to ensure they are working; replace batteries at least annually
- Develop a thorough fire escape plan and practice it by holding fire drills twice a year; make sure you know two ways out of every room
- Teach everyone in your household that once they are out, they must stay out until firefighters say it is safe to go back inside; get out first, then call the fire department

For more information about Fire Prevention Week, log on to the official Web site:  
[www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).

*The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State, including inspections of state-licensed facilities, plan review of fire protection systems and school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data. For additional information, you may visit our Web page at [www.wsp.wa.gov](http://www.wsp.wa.gov) and then click on "State Fire Marshal."*

For more information on Fire Prevention Week, contact your local fire department or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0400.

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